
CHAPTER 213 SERVE AS A MEMBER OF A FLIGHT OPERATIONS EVALUATION BOARD

Section 1 Background

1. PTRS ACTIVITY CODE: 1814

3. OBJECTIVE. This chapter provides guidance to inspectors who serve as members or technical advisors on a Flight Operations Evaluation Board.

5. GENERAL.

A. *Definitions.*

(1) *Flight Operations Evaluation Board (FOEB).* An FOEB is a council of specialists responsible for the Master Minimum Equipment List (MMEL) for a type of aircraft. The board's main responsibilities are to develop and maintain an MMEL (new or revised) and accomplish an operational evaluation of the aircraft. The manager of an Aircraft Evaluation Group (AEG) establishes an FOEB.

(2) *Flight Operations Policy Board (FOPB).* An FOPB provides direction, guidance, and policy for the FOEB. An FOPB consists of AEG managers and representatives from AFS-200 and AFS-800.

(3) *Flight Standardization Board (FSB).* An FSB is a designated group of operations inspectors who determine type rating, certification, and training requirements for new or modified aircraft.

(4) *Master Minimum Equipment List (MMEL).* An MMEL is a list of equipment that may be inoperative during aircraft operation. The MMEL is developed by the FOEB and approved by AFS-200 and AFS-800. The MMEL is the basis for an operator's Minimum Equipment List (MEL).

(5) *Relief.* For purposes of this chapter, relief is defined as authorization to deviate from the requirement for specific aircraft equipment to be operative.

B. Purpose and Composition of the FOEB. An FOEB develops a proposed MMEL. A board may also revise an existing MMEL.

(1) Chairperson. The FOEB chairperson is

normally an operations specialist from the AEG responsible for the particular aircraft, and will be appointed by the AEG manager. (This individual is frequently the chairperson of the FSB that evaluated the aircraft in question.) The chairperson plans board functions, sets the agenda, records meeting minutes, assembles and prepares final reports, and resolves any technical deficiencies occurring on the board.

(a) The chairperson provides schedules and periodic progress reports to the managers of AFS-200 or AFS-800, as appropriate.

(b) Through agenda preparation, the chairperson develops the issues for discussion and their supporting rationale. The chairperson has final authority in resolving disagreements.

(c) The chairperson arranges meetings with industry users and manufacturers to gather additional information on proposed MMEL items.

(d) After the aircraft is certificated, the chairperson conducts FOEB meetings to review amendments to the MMEL.

(2) Members. The following specialists may serve as members of an FOEB: an operations inspector, the flight test pilot most familiar with the aircraft, a maintenance specialist, an avionics specialist assigned to the Maintenance Review Board for the aircraft, and a representative from AFS-200 or AFS-800.

(3) Advisors. FOEB advisors may include operations inspectors qualified in the aircraft, maintenance or avionics inspectors, aircraft certification personnel, or representatives of the manufacturer.

C. How the Board Works. The board is established by the AEG, which then appoints the chairperson. The chairperson appoints board members. The chairperson also prepares the agenda, which presents MMEL items for new or existing aircraft.

For simple additions to or revisions of an MMEL, a meeting can be conducted by telephone or some other informal way. For new aircraft or major revisions to an MMEL, the process is more complex. The following paragraphs describe a typical routine for approving a new MMEL or adopting a major revision.

(1) First, a closed FOEB meeting is held to discuss the merits of individual MMEL items and to gather information from members, based on their technical expertise. At this meeting, an FOEB position is established for each agenda item. At the chairperson's discretion, non-FAA advisors may attend to give technical information.

(2) A public meeting is held to gather information and input from the manufacturer and industry. During this meeting, the FOEB position on each MMEL item is presented to the public. Discussion is encouraged, and any new or conflicting information is considered in a subsequent, closed FOEB meeting. If no new information is gathered, issues may be settled at this meeting.

(3) Last, a final, closed FOEB meeting is held to address each unresolved item. The chairperson submits the board's determination to AFS-200 and AFS-800 for concurrence.

D. Examples of Members' Tasks. Each FOEB member reviews the documents provided by the chairperson as well as the aircraft flight manual. Each inspector contributes technical expertise based on personal knowledge and experience, and also responds to industry comments and questions in a technically credible manner. All members participate in the meetings as advisors.

E. FAA/Industry Meeting Preparation. The purposes of the FOEB's public meetings are to obtain any information about the proposed MMEL that was not considered at the closed meeting, to present the FOEB's position to the public, and to negotiate differences. Before the public meeting, FOEB members should review all pertinent documents and the aircraft flight manual to ensure that their technical knowledge is current. During the meeting, members should:

(1) Be prepared to comment at the request of the chairperson (or confer in private with the chairperson outside of the meeting).

(2) Take notes to supplement the official minutes.

(3) Use discretion in releasing any information received at closed FOEB meetings to non-FAA personnel.

(4) Neither criticize nor compare manufacturers.

(5) Refrain from argument to justify an FAA position.

F. Distribution of the Board's Findings. The detailed minutes of the public meeting should include the full range of conflicts and discussion. The chairperson submits the proposed MMEL or MMEL revision to the AEG manager for review and concurrence. The AEG submits the MMEL to AFS-200 for the division manager's signature. After approval, the MMEL or MMEL revision is then released to district offices through the MMEL subsystem of the Aviation Safety Analysis System (ASAS).

Section 2 Procedures

1. PREREQUISITES AND COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS.

A. **Prerequisites.** This task requires knowledge of FAA policies, knowledge of subject aircraft systems and operational requirements, and qualification as an Aviation Safety Inspector (Operations).

B. **Coordination.** This task requires coordination with the appropriate AEG, AFS-200, AFS-800, the Type Certification Board, the aircraft manufacturer, or the Flight Standardization Board.

3. REFERENCES, FORMS, JOB AIDS.

A. References.

- FAR Parts 1, 61, 91, 121, 125, 135
- Order 1100.5, FAA Field Organization
- Order 8100.5, Aircraft Certification Directorate Procedures
- Order 8700.1, General Aviation Inspector's Handbook

B. Forms.

- FAA Form 8430.21, Operating Certificate
- FAA Form 8430.7, Minimum Equipment List

C. Job Aids.

- None

5. PROCEDURES.

A. **PTRS.** Open PTRS.

B. **Review Agenda.** Review each agenda item.

(1) Consider the request to ensure that granting relief will not conflict with:

- (a) Applicable regulations.
- (b) Type certification requirements.

(c) Aircraft flight manual limitations, abnormal or emergency procedures, normal procedures, aircraft performance.

(d) FAA policy guidance.

(e) Airworthiness directives.

(f) Recommendations of flight test engineers.

(2) Consider the following factors before making recommendations:

(a) Regulatory or policy requirements.

(b) Risk (Will granting relief compromise safety?).

(c) Transfer of function (Will another component or system assume the function of the inoperative equipment?).

(d) Next most critical failure (If a supporting system fails, how will that affect the other equipment? What back-up system exists?).

(e) Extended range operations (Is this equipment required for extended range operations?).

(3) Compare the proposed MMEL against the current MMEL, if available.

C. **Participate in Closed Meeting.** Prepare for the closed FAA meeting by integrating the results of the technical review. Be well-informed and able to provide the chairperson with comments on each item. A board member's comments should include an opinion on whether to grant relief, and justification for that opinion.

D. Participate in Public Meeting.

(1) Prepare for the public meeting by reviewing the FOEB's position on each MMEL agenda item from the FAA closed meeting. Bring technical materials such as the relevant FAR, aircraft flight manual, current MMEL, etc.

(2) Anticipate and plan for public response to changes or additions to the agenda.

(3) Take notes to provide the chairperson with written confirmation of comments to MMEL agenda items.

(4) Document the proceedings if requested by the chairperson. Retain these notes until the MMEL is approved or denied.

E. ***Discuss Open Items in Another Closed FAA Meeting.*** This meeting is held to resolve issues still open after the public meeting. It is conducted as described in paragraph B.

F. ***PTRS.*** Conclude PTRS entry.

7. TASK OUTCOMES. Completion of this task results in one or more of the following:

A. Documentation of items that should not be approved.

B. Changes to agenda items recommended by inspector.

9. FUTURE ACTIVITIES. The inspector may participate in a reconvening of the FOEB for subsequent MMEL revisions or problems that arise after an MMEL is approved.